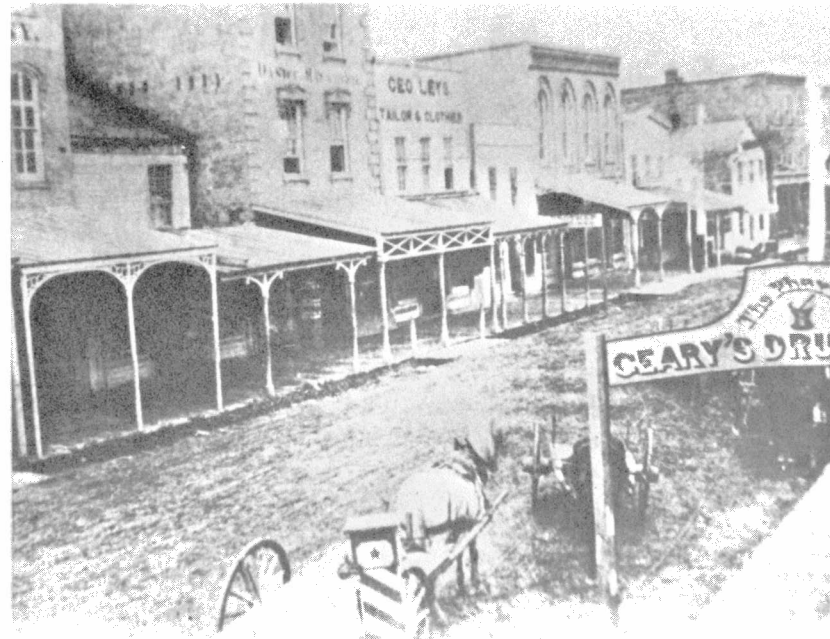


THE RAPIDS



History and Architecture of Sarnia

This booklet is an attempt to develop in the community a pride in, and awareness of, the history and architecture of the City. It was prepared as a result of an agreement between the Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission through its 1980 Summer Youth Employment Program. Supervision and consultation for the project was provided by Mr. Joseph Smolders, Mr. J. Pace, Director of Education, and Mr. Wheatley.

Front Cover - A photograph of downtown Sarnia taken in 1870.

THE RAPIDS

History and Architecture of Sarnia

Mary Ellen Feeney

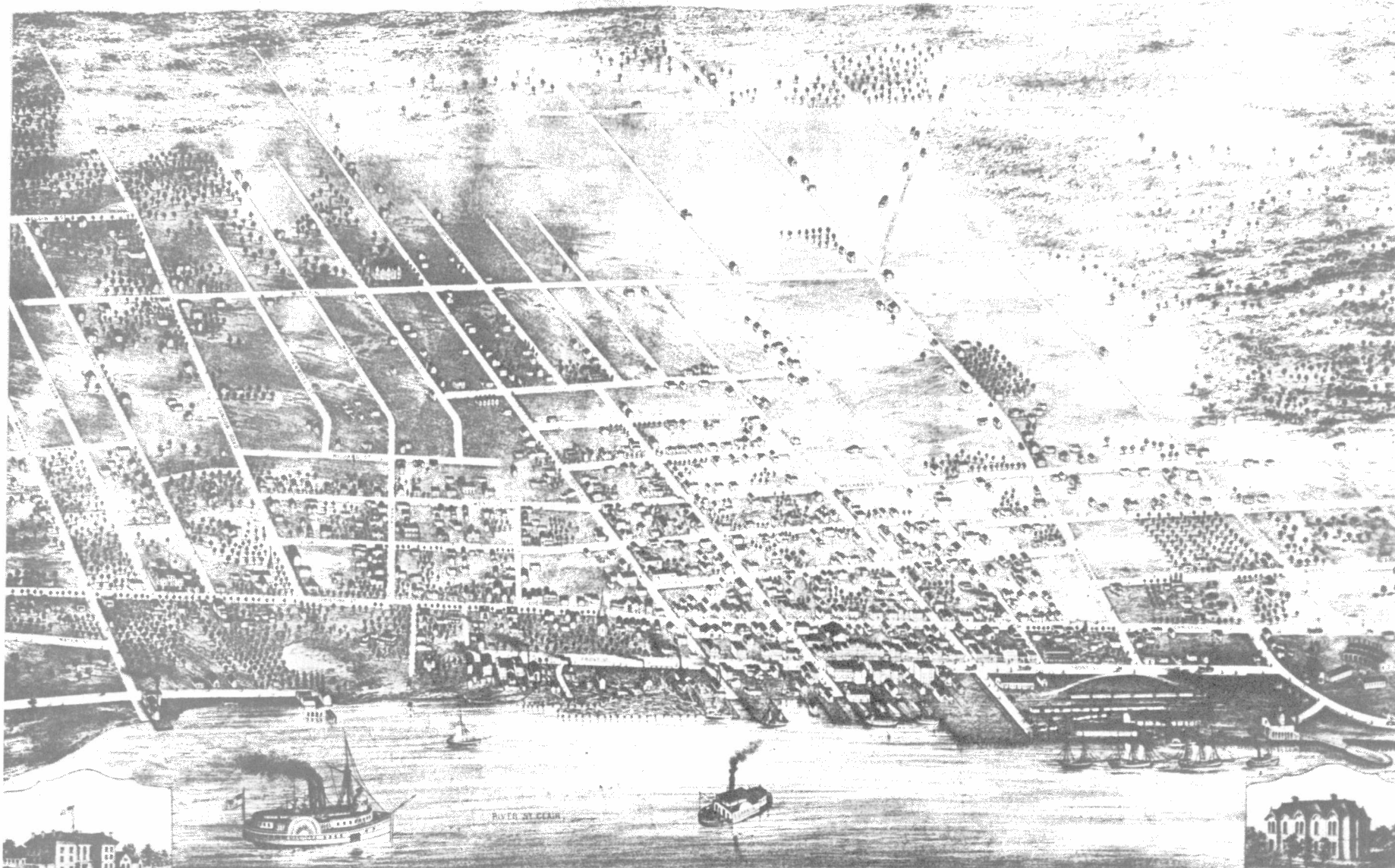
Research and Layout

David Cowan

Research and Photography

Gino Fazio

Research and Architectural Drawings



BUILDINGS
 1. CHURCH
 2. GOVERNMENT BUILDING
 3. SCHOOL
 4. HOUSES
 5. FACTORY

BIRD'S EYE VIEW
 OF
PORT OF CALL.
 LAMBTON COUNTY, ONTARIO.
 DESIGNED BY C. A. B. 1872.

COAST GUARD
 1. LIGHTHOUSE
 2. COAST GUARD STATION
 3. LIGHTHOUSE
 4. LIGHTHOUSE
 5. LIGHTHOUSE
 6. LIGHTHOUSE
 7. LIGHTHOUSE



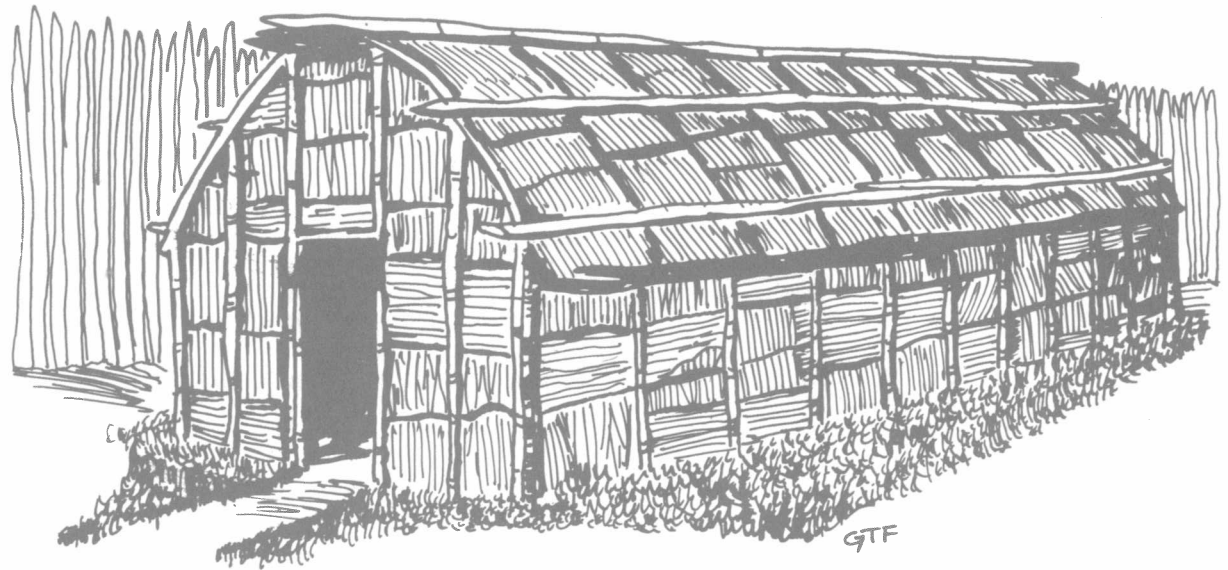
Early Days

According to archaeologists, two Indian villages were located around Sarnia, one at Petagwana (Point Edward) and one on London Road.

After 1615, Etienne Brule was probably the first European to visit the area. The Iroquoian Neutral and Tobacco Indians who inhabited Southwestern Ontario at this time, probably lived in longhouses, growing corn as a staple crop. Shortly after the Iroquois destroyed Huronia, they cleared the Neutrals and Tobaccos from the area (circa 1651). Later, the Chippewa (Ojibwa) Indians moved here from the North. They built dome-shaped wigwams or conical tipis covered with birch bark or rush mats. In 1669, Joliet canoed the Ottisissippe, the St. Clair River's name. Two missionaries sailed with DeLaSalle in the Griffon, the first ship to sail the upper Great Lakes. One missionary, Father Hennepin named the river St. Clair on the saint's feast-day, August 12, 1679. They towed their ship through the rapids where the river joins Lake Huron.

In 1686, Sieur Duluth founded Fort St. Joseph, supposedly at Petagwana. The Royal Proclamation of 1763, provided lands, reserved as hunting grounds, to several tribes of Indians as undisturbed possessions. By treaty, in 1790, 1796 and 1827, the Indians surrendered parts of the present Lambton County and City of Sarnia. Reserves were established at the Rapids (Sarnia) and other centres in Lambton County for the Indians' use.

The Rapids Reservation included 10,000 acres. In 1831, the government appointed William Jones, Indian agent, to help the Indians look after their affairs.



An Iroquoian Longhouse covered with rush mats.

Jay's Treaty forced the British to leave Detroit in 1796. Settlers then began to move into the Rapids area. Until the land was surveyed around 1830, most of the early settlers either squatted or leased the land from the Indians.

Captain Richard Emeric Vidal R.N.

1784-1854



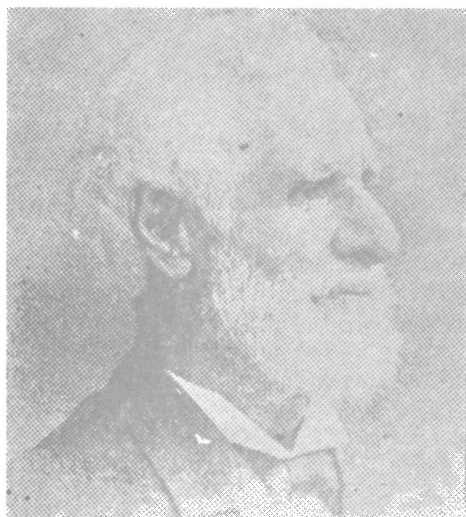
CAPT. R. E. VIDAL, R.N.

As early as 1815, Captain Vidal mapped the shoreline from Lake Erie to Manitoulin Island. Retiring in 1834, he moved to Canada from England. For his services with the Royal Navy he was entitled to two hundred acres of crown land. His grant extended from London Road to George Street and from the River to East Street where he built a log cabin and resided. One year later, he was recalled to the navy for service. Upon retiring for a second time, he returned to find his house occupied by a family of eight called the Ferguson family who had moved into his vacant house establishing the area's first tavern. When Captain Vidal returned to his home he had to evict the family. He rebuilt his home.

In 1848, Captain Vidal bought land on the corner of London Road and Vidal Street from George Durand. He then hired Alexander Mackenzie to build a church. St. Paul's was the first Anglican Church in Port Sarnia. Later, the name St. Paul's was changed to St. George's. In the early days of Port Sarnia settlers relied upon Detroit, the nearest large town, for provisions. Vidal made regular trips to Detroit and helped stock George Durand's store which was at that time the largest store in Port Sarnia. The Upper Canada Government felt that Vidal should be paying duty on his imports. Two custom officials boarded his ship. They demanded duties on the cargo Vidal was carrying from Detroit. Vidal bluntly refused and ordered the officials off his ship at gun point. Ironically, Vidal was appointed by the government at a later date, as the first customs collector for the Port of Sarnia.

Honourable Alexander Vidal M.L.C.

1819-1906



Alexander Vidal was the son of Captain Richard Emeric Vidal. Alexander was born in 1819 in Bracknell, Berkshire, England and came to Canada with his parents in 1834 at the age of fifteen. He became an agent of the Bank of Upper Canada and later an agent of the Bank of Montreal in Port Sarnia. From 1840 he was prominent in the "Temperance Movement." In 1853 he was appointed Treasurer of the County of Lambton. Ten years later he was elected to the Legislative Council of Canada, and was finally appointed Senator.

Alexander Vidal is remembered for his attempt to sue the Anglican Church Synod in 1887, concerning the sale of St. George's Anglican Church and property. The suit was initiated because Alexander's father, Captain Richard Emeric Vidal, R.N., had purchased about one acre of land in 1843 and erected a private Chapel on the property. A burial vault had also been located on the property, and Captain Vidal had given permission for the Church of England missionaries to use the facilities. In 1858, Captain Vidal conveyed the property to the local Church Society. In 1874 the Church Society incorporated with the Anglican Synod of Huron. The church flourished, and in 1884 a decision was made to move to another location and build a new church. The Synod agreed and proceeded to sell the land on which the original church stood. Alexander Vidal was convinced that the church had no right to sell the land his father



had so generously donated, and proceeded to legally block the sale. The case was heard in the Chancery Court in London, Ontario, in 1877. The Court concluded that the Church now owned the property and had a right to sell, provided the proceeds were directed toward the building of a new Church. Almost twenty years later, in 1906, Alexander Vidal died in Sarnia at the age of 87. He was buried in Lakeview Cemetery.

Original St. George's Church on London Rd.

Malcolm Cameron

1808-1876

Claimed to be the Founder of Sarnia

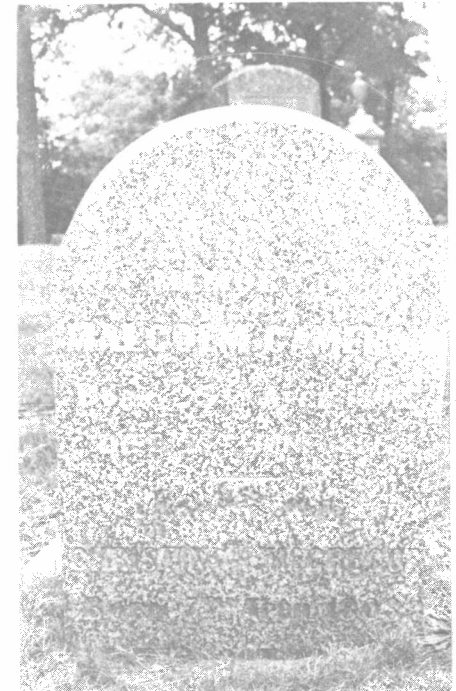


Malcolm Cameron was born in Trois Rivieres in Lower Canada (Quebec) on the 25th of April 1808. His father, Angus Cameron first employed as a hospital Sergeant settled in Perth in 1816 where he was an innkeeper. At the age of twelve, Malcolm Cameron lived on a farm and kept the ferry across Perth's Mississippi River. Later, in 1824 Cameron headed for Montreal in the middle of winter. Arriving with two frozen cheeks he acquired a job as a stable boy in order to raise enough money to move to Upper Canada. In 1833 Cameron visited Scotland on business and while there, he married his cousin, Miss McGregor of Glasgow. He came west in 1834 purchasing one hundred acres of land from Dominique LaForge, in the present downtown

area. He surveyed the land into lots to be sold to incoming settlers. He became a general merchant, lumberman, shipowner, ship-builder, miller, and land speculator. For the shipment of lumber from Sarnia to London, England, Cameron had six boats docked here. The forests of the area were abundant with valuable hickory, walnut, and oak. In the year 1850, one sixth of all the oak timber shipped from Canada to Great Britain was shipped by him from Lambton County. Timber in the form of staves went to Jamaica for the construction of rum barrels. Many settlers followed Cameron from Perth County, Trois Rivieres and Scotland.



Living in Sarnia until 1863, Cameron's house was on the site of the Colonial Hotel. Before the hotel was torn down, Cameron's house had been incorporated into the building, parts of which were still visible from the street.



In 1863 Cameron was appointed Queen's Printer in Ottawa, a position he held until 1869. Cameron was referred to as the 'Apostle of Temperance', and in 1855, he was the first to introduce a prohibitory measure in the Canadian legislature. He died on June 1st, 1876 at the age of 68. He is buried at Lakeview Cemetery, Sarnia.

George Durand 1805-1880

Sarnia's First Postmaster

At the age of twenty-eight, George Durand arrived in Canada, settling in The Rapids. Upon arriving, he bought twenty-five acres of land along George Street from Captain Vidal. His land extended between London Road and Maxwell Street. A small stream which ran through the property was enlarged and extended back to Perch Creek. He used this stream to generate enough power to run a sawmill built in 1837. Durand built a log cabin store on that part of London Road which lay between Front and Christina Street. The store was located where Canada Trust is now situated on London Road. In 1837 he moved his store to Front Street. In the same year the store became Port Sarnia's first Post Office and Durand became the first Post Master. Most of the incoming mail came through London to Port Sarnia by way of horseback.

Although Durand was Protestant, his wife, Mary (Jones) was Catholic. In honour of his wife, he donated a large lot of the corner of London Road and Christina Street for a Roman Catholic Church. George Durand died in the year 1880 at the age of seventy-five and is buried in the Episcopal Cemetery in Ancaster, close to Hamilton, Ontario.

Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery is the location of a large tombstone in memory of George Durand's wife, Mary Jones and their children.



This photograph of a log cabin which is claimed to be the first store in Sarnia is an example of what George Durand's store possibly looked like when he first built it back in the early days of Port Sarnia.

Rt. Hon. Alexander Mackenzie

1822-1892

Canada's Second Prime Minister



Born in 1822, in Logarait, Perthshire, Scotland, Alexander Mackenzie moved to Canada in 1842. By the age of twenty, Mackenzie had become a fully trained stone mason, and in Canada became a successful builder. He moved with his brother from Kingston to Port Sarnia in 1847. Among his early buildings in Port Sarnia were the Episcopal Church and the first Bank of Upper Canada building. He also built the County Registrar Office which was located on part of the Drawbridge Inn site, the Lambton County jail, council, and courtrooms, where the Chalet Motel is located. He assisted in building a small part of

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Christina Street. Besides building his own house on Cromwell Street, Mackenzie built the house on Christina Street, known today as the Mackenzie house. This house and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church are believed to be the only remaining architectural structures built by Alexander Mackenzie in Sarnia.

Mackenzie became quite involved in both municipal and county politics while in Port Sarnia. Mackenzie started a Liberal Reform newspaper in Port Sarnia in 1852 called The Lambton Shield. During its two years of existence he spoke out in favor of such issues as the separation of the church and state, free trade, a system of free common schools, and reciprocity. While in Port Sarnia, Mackenzie became close friends with George Brown. Mackenzie encouraged Brown to run for office and he used his newspaper to help Brown in his campaign. Before Brown ran for office, Malcolm Cameron represented Lambton County. In the Shield, Mackenzie often spoke against Cameron. Eventually, Cameron filed a lawsuit which brought an end to the Shield.

From 1861 Mackenzie served as the elected member for this area. In 1867 he served in both houses and took over the leadership of the Federal Liberal Party after George Brown's defeat. In 1873 the government was defeated on a want-of-confidence motion and Mackenzie became Prime Minister. He served until 1878. Mackenzie died on April 17th, 1892 at the age of seventy and is buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Sarnia.



Alexander Mackenzie is considered one of Sarnia's most important early citizens. He is thought of as a major political figure to whom many significant advances in Canada and the Sarnia area may be attributed.

Origin of Names

Naming of Sarnia

There is an interesting history behind the naming of our city. The early French squatters called this area 'Les Chutes' which in English means "The Rapids". This was inspired by the swirling waters entering River St. Clair from Lake Huron. By 1834 there were only five houses in "The Rapids." George Durand had a small merchant store and Oliver Allen a tavern, to accommodate travellers arriving to look at land.

The first meeting to change Sarnia's name was held in 1836. A vote was necessary since there were various groups proposing different names. The English wanted "Buenos Ayres" because of the fresh clean air coming from Lake Huron. The Scotch favored "New Glasgow" after a city in Scotland as suggested by Malcolm Cameron. Commander Vidal, being an English settler, strongly opposed the labelling of the village with a Scottish name. Sir John Colborne paid an official visit at this time suggesting "Port Sarnia." Sarnia was an ancient Roman name of Guernsey Island of which he had been Governor. A vote was held on January 4th, 1836 and to Commander Vidal's joy, the Scotsmen were defeated. Port Sarnia was adopted as the name of the village. In 1857, when Port Sarnia was incorporated as a town, the name was shortened to Sarnia.

Street Names

The names of streets in Sarnia come from many interesting origins. Both family names and the settlers' country of origin influenced the naming of the streets in this city.

Since many of the early settlers were of Scottish origin, they named what is now Front Street, Trongate Street. This was the name of the very famous street in Glasgow, Scotland. In Sarnia, this street began at the LaForge farm (now the corner of Davis and Front Street), proceeded north to George Street and then angled through what is now the site of the City Hall.

In the 1830's, a former naval officer named Henry Jones started a community in Bright's Grove which was unsuccessful, named Toon O'Maxwell. He named Maxwell Street after this community.

Malcolm Cameron named many streets after his family. In 1872 Christina Street was named after his wife, Euphemia Street after his mother, Colina (now College Street) after his daughter and Lochiel Street in memory of his homeland of Scotland. Wellington, Cromwell, Cobden and Bright Streets were also named by Cameron after men he admired.

Commander Richard Emeric Vidal also named streets after his family and family name. These names include Vidal Street after himself, Essex Street after his uncle, Mitton Street in honour of his mother, Charlotte Street after his wife, and Penrose Street after a relative. George and Durand Streets were named for George Durand. The Indian agent Froome Talfourd had Talfourd Street named in his honour. Cromwell Street is named for Oliver Cromwell. In memory of Lord Elgin a street was named Elgin. Victoria Street was named in honour of Queen Victoria, the



Sarnia's Coat of Arms meaning Sarnia always.

reigning monarch. The diverse sources, by which the streets of Sarnia were given their names, lend an interesting historical element to the area.

Saddy House 197 London Road

The house at 197 London Road on the corner of Brock Street and London Road is one of the oldest houses in Sarnia remaining on its original lot. The house was built approximately in 1861 for a man named James Rogers, presumably by Alexander Mackenzie. At that time, Rogers purchased the lot, No. 114, from people in St. Thomas for three hundred dollars. The lot was much larger at the time of purchase than it is today. Rogers was a tombstone maker and many examples of his work still exist in local cemeteries. The shelves in the basement of the house are made of granite. Between the years 1905 and 1910 the back of the house was used as a candy store by the Rogers.

The house is of yellow, double brick construction with a substantial stone foundation. Over the frame of the front door is the carving of the head of a young man. The eyes appear blind since there was no attempt by the artist to carve pupils. Over the two front windows are the carvings of a tudor rose and a laurel wreath. The house is in the modified Georgian style with a three bay front. Bargeboards are on the gable over the front door. Pine was used extensively throughout the interior of the house.

The present owner, Sarnia Gazette Editor, Marceil Saddy, purchased the house in 1960 from the Rogers family.



Mackenzie House

316 Christina Street

The Mackenzie House was built in 1861 by Alexander Mackenzie, Canada's second Prime Minister for his brother John Mackenzie. The front of the house on Christina Street is decorated with his stonework. In 1864 Elizabeth Mackenzie, wife of John Mackenzie, scribed her name with her diamond ring on the glass in the main window over the front door and dated it. The inscription is there today.

The architecture of this house is Victorian, but influenced by the Regency and Scottish styles. The brick for the building was imported from Chatham. For many years this house was the home of Dr. Archibald McLean, who practised medicine in Sarnia until he became Registrar of Deeds for the County of Lambton in 1891. Following the death of Dr. McLean in 1928, his family maintained the house for several more decades.

In 1964, Judge David Kent purchased and restored the house. The house is considered to be one of the last remaining architectural structures built by Alexander Mackenzie in Sarnia. On October 2nd, 1977 a plaque was presented by the Heritage Administration Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation marking it as an historical site.



Belchamber House

291 N. Christina Street

The original owner of the first house north of the Drawbridge Inn, was Mr. James Belchamber, the owner of the Belchamber Hotel on North Front Street. Later, Mr. George W. Storey, owner of the G.W. Storey Tobacco Store purchased the house. After many different owners, the present resident, Dr. Janey McLeod uses the house as her office. Built during the Victorian period, (1840's to 1890's) the house is architecturally interesting. A classical influence is evident in the moulding over the two large front windows. This influence is also present on the porch with the use of wood column and Ionic capitals. Above the porch is a small tower that balances with the bellcast mansard roof. All of these elements combine to form a well proportioned Victorian home.



Lawrence House

127 Christina Street South

In the year 1892, William F. Lawrence built a home on the corner of Christina and Wellington Street, which has become today a fascinating landmark. The house cost approximately \$30,000 to build. Mr. Lawrence was proprietor of the Jacob Lawrence and Sons Wholesale and Retail Lumber Business at the time.

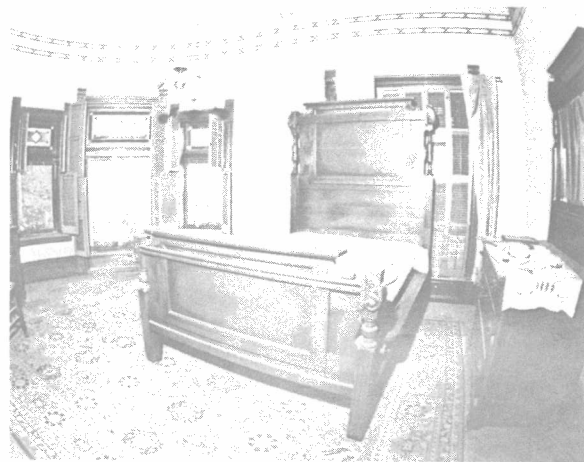
A stepping stone engraved with the family name was laid on the Christina Street boulevard. Awnings once decorated the windows of the house.

The Lawrence House is a variation of Victorian architecture known as 'Queen Anne', which became the great picturesque style popular at the end of the nineteenth century. The roof with different sized gables and dormers, high chimneys, towers and turrets, gave the house the irregular form. Walls were hollowed out for recessed balconies and bulging bay windows. The Lawrence House is a three-storey building. A children's game room covers the third floor of the area where the tower overlooks Christina Street. Five bedrooms cover the second floor, one containing a fireplace. The first floor has a large alcoved stairway which faces the front entrance with double doors. A large slab of plate mirror with hand painted flower motifs covers one wall at the top of the first flight of stairs.

The last persons living in the home were the original builder's wife, her sister and a maid. When Mrs. Lawrence passed on in 1940, the house was abandoned and everything was left in its place. For nearly forty years this house has stood literally, as it was, when last occupied. Due to a section in the will of Mrs.

Lawrence, the house was not to be opened or destroyed for a certain period of time.

On September 16th, 1977 the last surviving member of the Lawrence family, Carroll Lawrence, donated the house to the City of Sarnia upon the condition that the city restore the home and maintain the name Lawrence. Approximately one month later the house was opened for public tour. Currently the house is covered under the Heritage Act through the Ontario Heritage Foundation, marking this structure as a significant contribution to Sarnia's history.



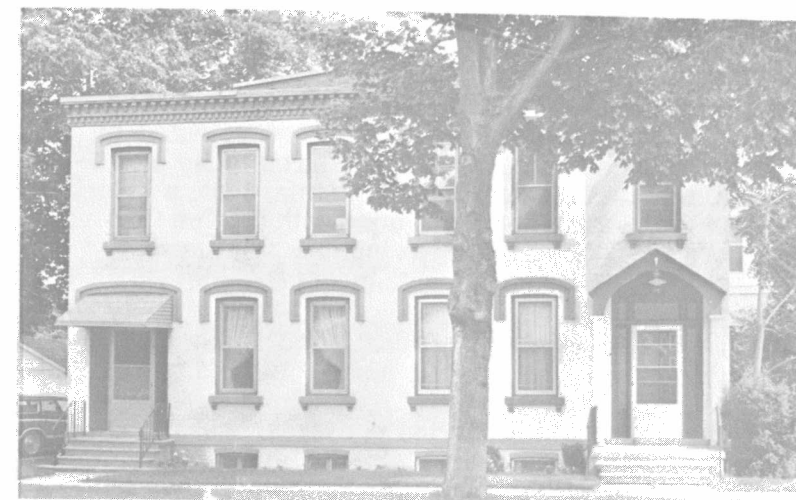
One of five bedrooms in the Lawrence house as it was in 1977.



The Lawrence House as it stands today.



The Lawrence House as it appeared in its heyday.



**Cowan House originally built by
John Turnbull
262 N. Vidal Street**

This house is built using red brick with yellow brick details and is typical of a French Canadian home. The French-stepped gables on the side of the house originally served as a fire wall. A French Bay window is situated below arched windows with copper roofing over it.

**Bradley House
270 Vidal Street**

This house is constructed of yellow brick. There is thick wood moulding over the windows and brackets above the bay windows. Note the keystones located above the windows. They are stone busts of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

**Fleming House
253 Vidal Street**

This house was built in the Victorian era with a ballroom on the third floor. Note the bellcast mansard roof and different gable ends on the dormers.

**Row House
118 Maria Street**

This building is known as the first multiple dwelling house in Sarnia. The building has a grey painted brick facade and pediment roof line. Note the interesting moulded hoods over the windows.

St. George's Anglican Church

248 Vidal Street North

In 1848 Captain Richard Emeric Vidal purchased one acre of land on the north side of London Road and built a church at his own expense. Alexander Mackenzie was contracted to build this church. The building was of brick construction with a series of small brick buttresses along the exterior walls. Once completed, Vidal presented the church to the parish. The architecture of this church was known as English Tudor Gothic style. The church was dedicated to the Patron Saint of England, Saint George.

The original organ intended for this church was salvaged from a sunken vessel in the St. Lawrence River, but was rejected by the original purchasers. All that remains of this church today is a stone with the date 1848, the east window, the Baptismal font, a tablet in memory of Captain Vidal, and a wooden plaque with the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer in gold lettering.

In 1884 the new St. George's church was built. It is located at the corner of Vidal and Charlotte Street on what was the Farr property. The architecture of this church was a revitalization of Early Gothic architecture called Victorian. The spire is a near perfect pyramidal projection and the buttresses are plain-staged with simple recessed slopes. The arched construction is carried out throughout the church from the doors to the large windows and bell towering openings which is in keeping with the Gothic style. The bell in this church was used as a fire alarm as well as for church services. It was common in those days to pay for the use of the pews in the church. Once the church was completed, Pew No. 8 was set aside for the use of the Vidal family free of charge.

In the year 1968, a stained glass window, of the Vidal crest was donated in honour of Captain Vidal and was installed in the Vestry.



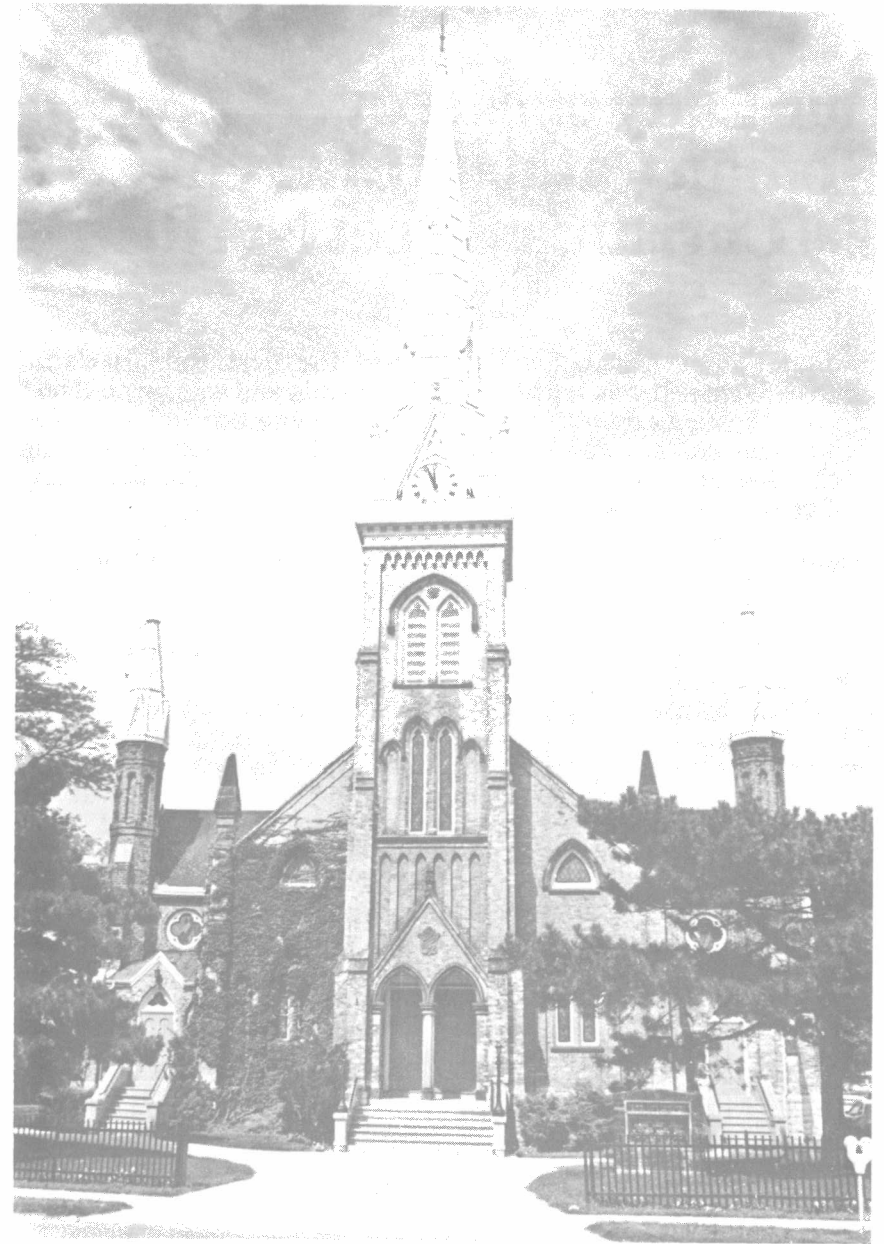
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church 261 Christina Street North

In 1841 the first Presbyterian Church in Port Sarnia was built. The church site, on Christina Street facing south, was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Cameron. This land had been bought by Cameron from Captain R.E. Vidal. Inside the church there were enclosed pews renting at one pound a year for a family and five shillings for one person.

In 1867, a new church was built directly behind the first church at a cost of \$16,740.00. The original church was later torn down. The new church was of brick, fired at a brickyard located at the corner of Vidal and Lochiel Street. The clay for bricks was brought in by ship from Chatham. The cornerstone for this church was laid on the day of Confederation, July 1st, 1867.

In 1876 the original bell from the first church was replaced by the present larger bell. For many years this bell served as a fire alarm for the Port of Sarnia as well as to call the congregation to church. In 1877 a clock was installed in the tower and because of its location it was considered the town's main timepiece. In 1881, the church was widened on each side to add seating for 302 people, and a Sunday School room was added at the back of the church. In 1965 the clock was replaced by a new electric clock from London England. This clock was made by the same company that made the famous clock in England called "Big Ben" located in the Parliament Buildings.

The architecture of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is a revitalization of Early Gothic architecture called Victorian. The Victorian age brought with it new achievements in structural systems and the disuse of huge buttresses to support the roof system in churches. St. Andrew's architecture is an exception for we find purely decorative small buttresses which slope outwards. The ornamentation found on the roof piers and secondary piers are typical of the Victorian attempt to revive a sense of art into the churches.

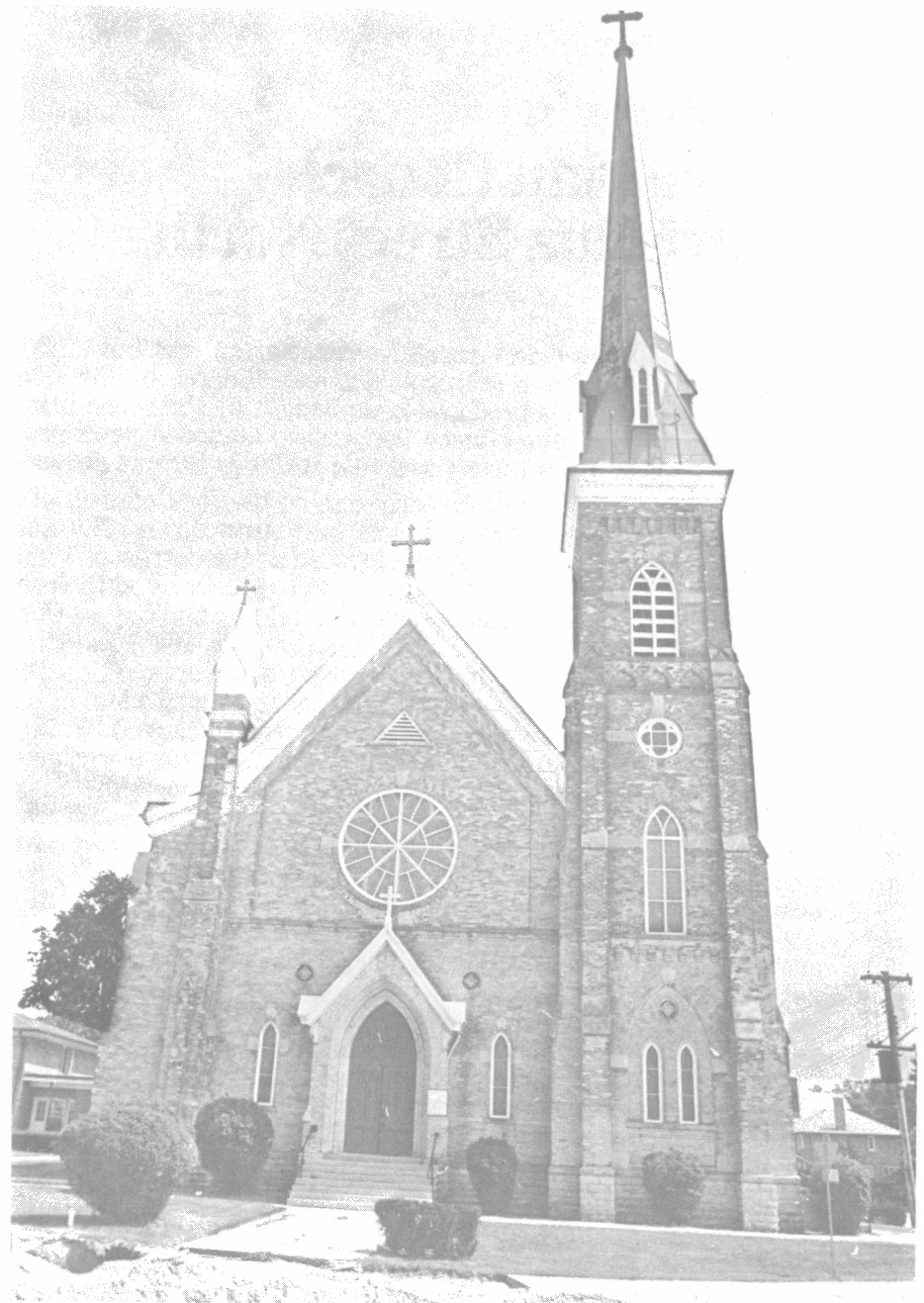


Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church 390 Christina Street North

In 1840 Father Duranquet established the first Roman Catholic Church in Sarnia. It was known as St. Michael's and was located on the same site as Our Lady of Mercy is today. George Durand, one of Sarnia's earliest citizens donated the land and lumber for St. Michael's Church. George Durand was Protestant but made the donation on behalf of his wife who was Catholic.

In 1857 the new church was built and re-named Our Lady of Mercy. It was built on Christina Street facing London Road. The old St. Michael's served as a rectory of the parish. At that time the original St. George's Anglican Church was Our Lady of Mercy's neighbour on London Road. It is interesting that in the early days of the church, Indians often came to the church in full ceremonial dress.

In 1877 the wooden church of Our Lady of Mercy was dismantled to build a new church on the same site, facing Christina Street and the river. The architecture was Early Gothic and incorporates such architectural pieces as the famous rose window found in most large European cathedrals. The exterior of the church has changed very little, except for the colouring, in one hundred years. The foundation was made of limestone: the structure of the church is white brick and sandstone, and the roof is made of slate. The pews in the church and the stained glass in the rose window in the south transept are original. When you enter the church you will notice the floor slopes up towards the back of the church. This was the intentional aim of the builders to allow for better viewing of the altar. Certainly one of the largest churches in Sarnia, Our Lady of Mercy has become a landmark of beauty in the eyes of the Church and the community.



St. Paul's Anglican Church

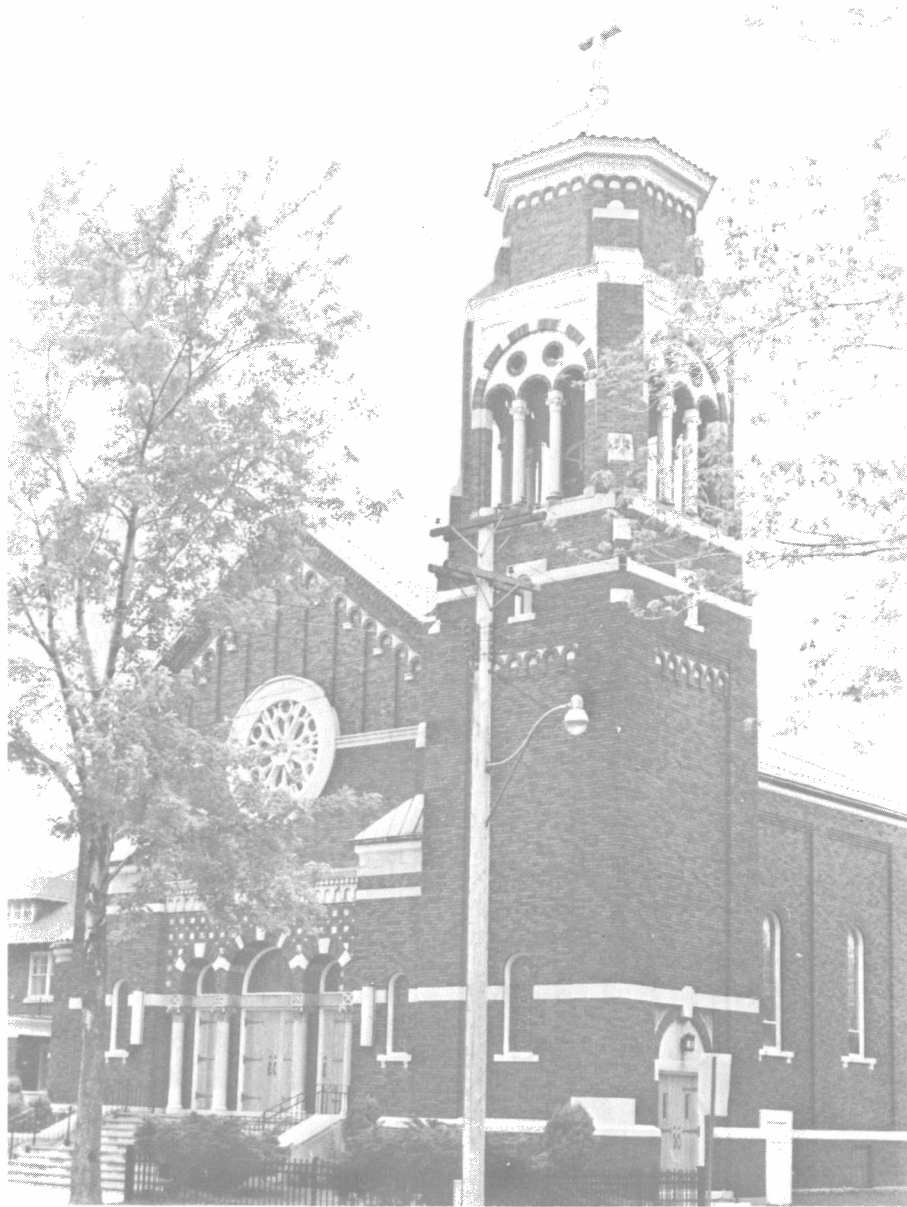
210 Michigan Road, Point Edward

St. Paul's Anglican Church has long been known as a landmark for sailors travelling the lake into the St. Clair River. The church is known as the 'tin-steeple-church' or more commonly the 'Mariners Church'. It is a small white church located on Michigan Road, the main street of Point Edward. Built in 1868, it was originally located on the corner of Livingston Street and Victoria Avenue. In 1902, St. Paul's was moved to its present site on Michigan Road. A range light known as the Point Edward lighthouse replaced the church as a navigational marker. The church was built as a gift of Mr. C.J. Bridges, then General Manager of the Old Grand Trunk Railroad in Point Edward and Mr. W. Hannaford who was another important official of the company. The old bell, now to be seen in the entrance of the church, was a locomotive engine bell cast in Troy, New York in 1859. Even today, a 'Sailor's Sunday' is held before the opening of every navigational season, in St. Paul's Anglican Church.

Architecture

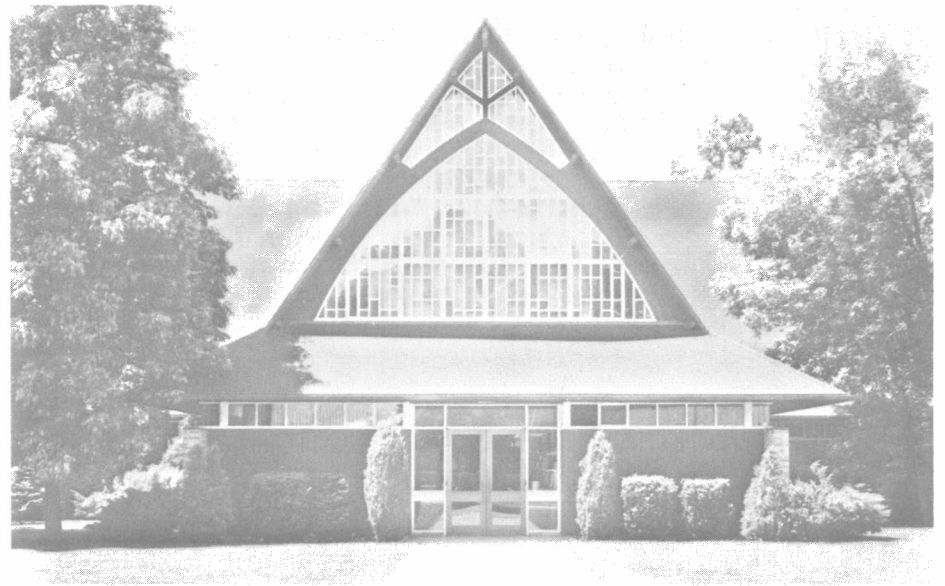
The architectural style of this church is Georgian, bold and simple rather than elaborate ornament, using board and batten construction.





**St. Joseph's 1923
293 Stuart Street**

The architecture of this church is a mixture of various styles. The rose windows in the gables are surrounded by carved stone.



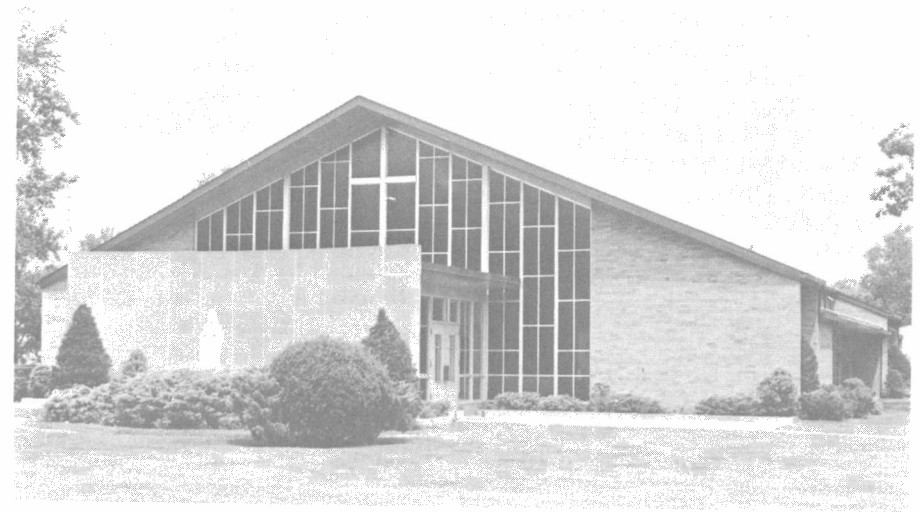
**St. Benedict's 1962
55 Lansdowne Avenue**

The plan of this church is crucifix in form with a bell-shaped roof. The Gables contribute natural light to the church's interior.



Grace United 1959
990 Cathcart Boulevard

The main chapel of this church is triangular in shape with dormered windows reaching the edge of the roof. Note how this triangular motif is carried out extensively throughout the church's architecture.



Sacred Heart 1959
1465 Lecaron Avenue

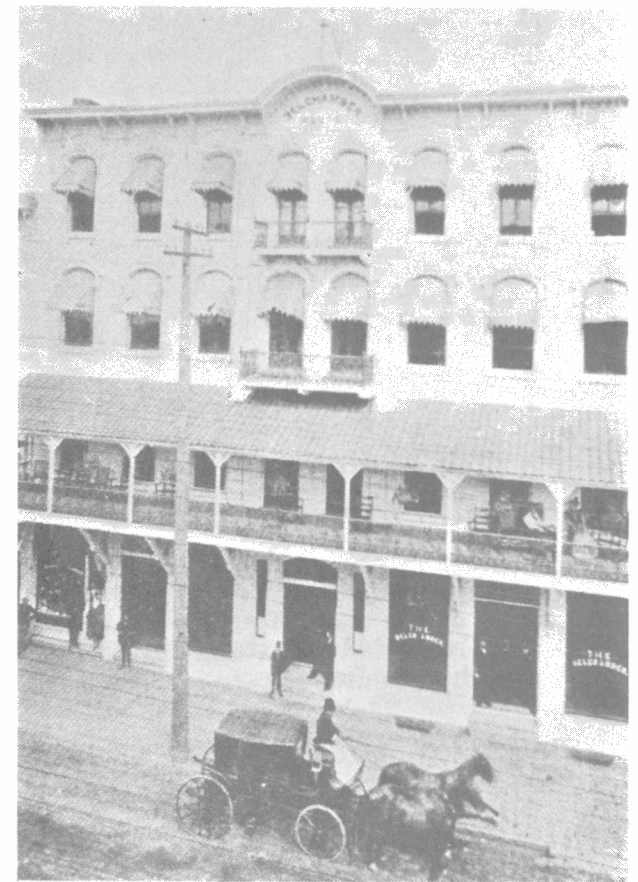
The architecture of this church is of sloped roof construction with basic gable end. The laminated beams in the interior form the main structure of this building.

Belchamber Hotel Front Street

Many of the prominent buildings of the late 1800's still stand on Front Street today. One example is a building once owned by James Belchamber which is still known today as the Belchamber Hotel. It stands on the east side of Front Street just south of Lochiel Street. At one time, one of the first saloons in Sarnia stood on this site, known as the Double-N-I, run by a man called Oliver Allen. It took its name from the sign 'Inn' which had been swung in the reverse position by the painter who put it up. The Double-N-I was replaced by the Exchange, and in 1858 James Belchamber took it over. In January of 1866 the Exchange burned to the ground. James Belchamber had the Belchamber Hotel built to replace it, in 1867. The hotel had an elaborate facade with arched windows overhung with wrought iron valances. The iron-work balcony on the second floor formed a porch over the sidewalk and a large round clock once hung from the porch. It had four stories, 57 bedrooms with a parlour on each floor and stables in the space between the east end of the building and Christina Street. The Belchamber had the reputation of a first class hotel. A newspaper, dated 1887, stated that, "the hotel was one of the finest hotels in Western Ontario and for elegance, taste, comfort and convenience it could not be surpassed by any hotel in the country."

The building contained stained glass, an office finished in grained walnut, fan lights, an elevator and balconies on the second and third floor. The old verandah in front was replaced by one that was eight feet wide and ran the whole width of the building. On May 1, 1881 the

Scott Act was passed. Bars could no longer do business Sundays and weekdays. The hotel owners closed their hotels in protest. Pranksters hung a cloth at halfmast from the flagstaff of the City Hall on George Street in protest. James McAvoy who had leased the Belchamber was out of town at the time and returned to find his hotel and stables closed. He opened them but the bar remained closed as long as the Scott Act remained in force. In the 1920's Samuel Hitchcock renovated the Belchamber and turned it into a business block. Today it contains apartments on the upper floors and three business establishments on the ground floor. As you walk by the building on Front Street, you can still read the name Belchamber on the front step.

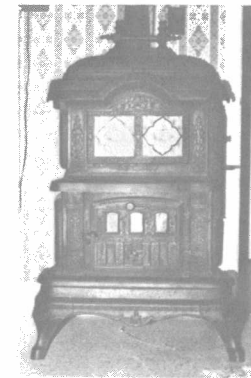


The Belchamber Hotel as it was in the 1800's.

Doherty Stove Works 175 Wellington Street

As early as 1882, the Doherty Stove Works existed on the corner of Wellington and Albert Streets. Cookstoves and heaters were produced in the moulding shop. Doherty insisted on using the finest sand available. Thus the sand used in the process of moulding, was imported from Albany, New York. The stove works also did castings for machinery and ploughs. Fifty workmen were employed from the surrounding area.

Total pay for all fifty workers was three hundred dollars a week which would be approximately six dollars a week per worker. In a newspaper advertisement dated November 10th, 1882 the stoveworks was described as follows, 'For workmanship or quality of material, the manufacturers of this firm are unsurpassed by those of any other established in the Dominion'. The building used for the Doherty Stove Works still stands today and is occupied by a charitable organization, The Goodwill Industries.



A cookstove and heater which were manufactured at the Doherty Stoveworks.

Doherty Stove Works Building as it exists today at the corner of Wellington and Vidal Streets, formerly Albert Street.

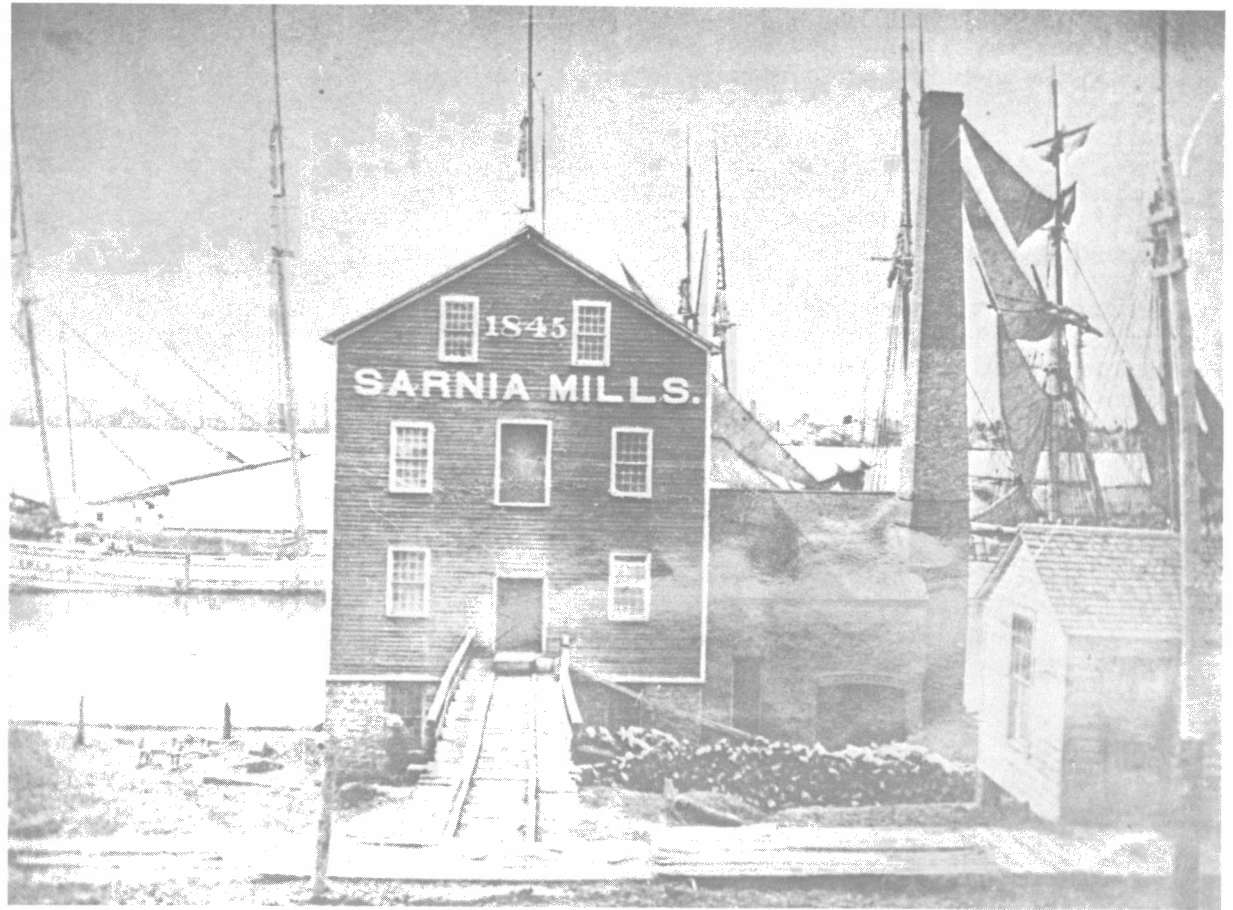


King Milling Company Limited 1845-1930's

First Building in Sarnia to Use Electricity

The King Milling Company was the first grist mill in Port Sarnia. It was built for the Honourable Malcolm Cameron in 1845 by James Flintoft who later became the first sheriff of Lambton. The mill was operated by Malcolm Cameron for twenty-five years, next to Sarnia Bay. In 1871, James King purchased the mill. He then had the original mill torn down and a new mill was erected in 1893. The new mill used steel grinding rolls instead of the old stones. This mill was the first building in Port Sarnia to be lit by electricity. The electricity was generated by a dynamo in the mill. On May 17th, 1896 the new mill was destroyed by fire. Another mill was built on the same site to replace it.

The King Milling Company was known in its day to be one of the best equipped in Ontario. It was a progressive company with a large domestic and export trade. Large quantities of 'White-Satin' a popular pastry flour, and 'Bonnie Doon' a bread flour, were exported to Great Britain. The King Milling Company was known in the late 1920's as the oldest manufacturing business in the Sarnia area.

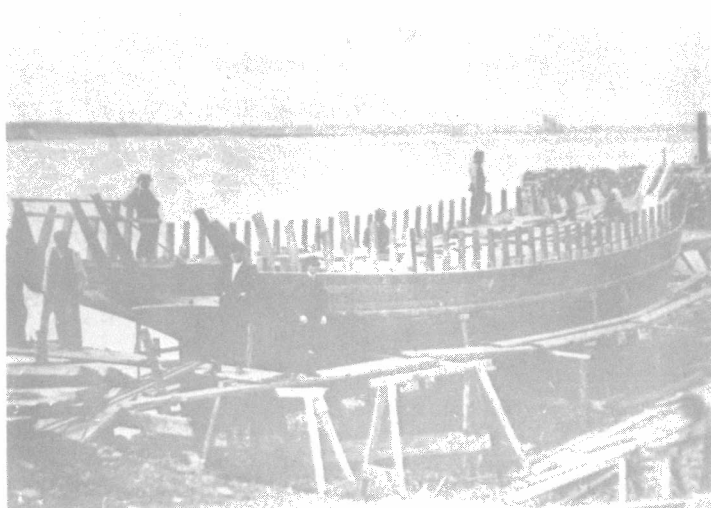


King Milling Company - Built for Malcolm Cameron in 1845.

Shipbuilding

By the year 1846, five vessels had been built in Sarnia, four sailing vessels and one small steamer. Six more ships were built by 1881. The largest of these ships was the Wawanosh, built by Robert Steed in 1873 measuring 138 feet long, 26 feet in beam and 12 feet high. Prior to the 1850's the St. Clair River flats had not been dredged and the ships had to be limited to a draft of six feet or less in order to navigate the river. Steam tugs were used to tow the sailing ships up the river to overcome the difficulties of the current and the wind. The headquarters for the Northern Navigation Company was based in Sarnia.

A ship named the Harmonic built in Collingwood, Ontario burned at dock in Sarnia after it caught fire from a burning warehouse. The fire departments of Sarnia, Port Huron and Point Edward tried to save the ship but she was a total loss. In 1940 Mac Craft built navy subchasers and Fairmile 'Q' escort boats. The Fairmile 'Q' was 112 feet long and weighed over one hundred tons. The vessels were used in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and other Canadian coastal waters. They were the first sea-going vessels built in Sarnia since the turn of the century. Le Duc d'Orleans, the cruise ship, is a former Fairmile 'Q'.



An unidentified boat being built on the Sarnia Bay.

The S.S. Monarch, built in Sarnia in 1888. This boat was lost in the Isle Royal.



Cleveland-Sarnia Sawmills Company Ltd.

Logging operations carried out in Lambton before 1900 provided logs to American sawmills. In 1899, the Canadian government passed a law forbidding the transportation of Canadian logs to American sawmills.

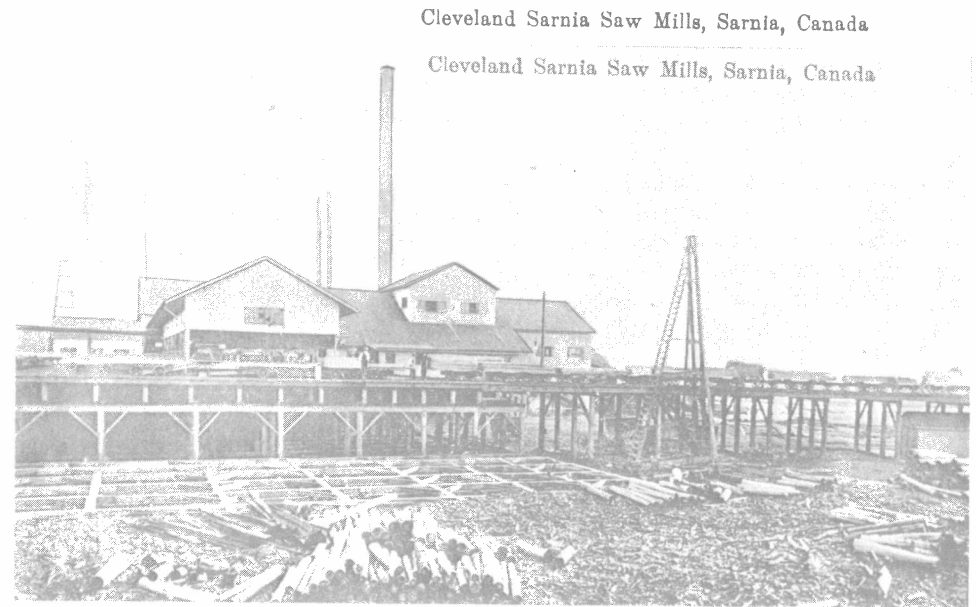
In 1901, the Cleveland-Sarnia Sawmills Company was formed. It consisted of two sawmills located on Sarnia Bay, at the intersection of Maxwell Street and Front Street. The timber for the sawmills was obtained from a mill at Spanish, Ontario which is situated on the north shore of Georgian Bay and from Diver, Ontario which is situated forty miles north of North Bay. The timber from Spanish was assembled in large rafts and towed down Lake Huron to Pt. Edward to the area where Canatara Park now stands. The large rafts were then broken down into small rafts to be taken from Lake Huron through the St. Clair River to Sarnia Bay. Timber from Diver, Ontario was hauled by rail to Sarnia.

The Cleveland-Sarnia Sawmills produced 250,000 board feet of lumber per day and the products were sold in Michigan, Ohio, New York and Ontario. In 1927 the Cleveland-Sarnia Sawmills were destroyed by fire.

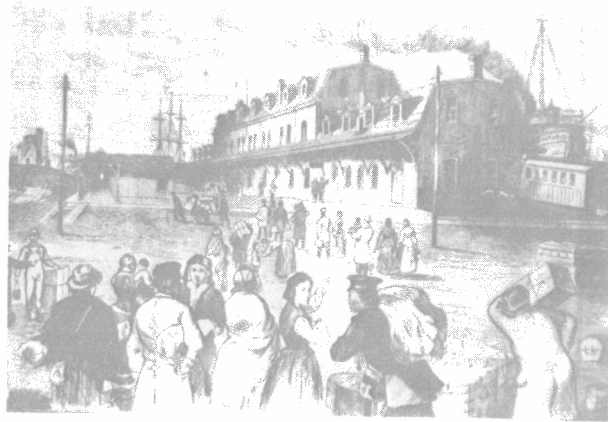


Horse teams were used by the sawmill to haul lumber to the site of the sawmill.

The sawmill as it stood at the foot of Front St. on Sarnia Bay.



Grand Trunk Railway



In 1853 a Canadian Senator bought 644 acres of land in Pt Edward at the cost of two dollars per acre on behalf of the Grand Trunk Railway. Of this land, thirty acres were sold to the railway. Pt. Edward was the best location for the station because of the easy access to ferry trains back and forth across the St. Clair River to connect with the American lines.

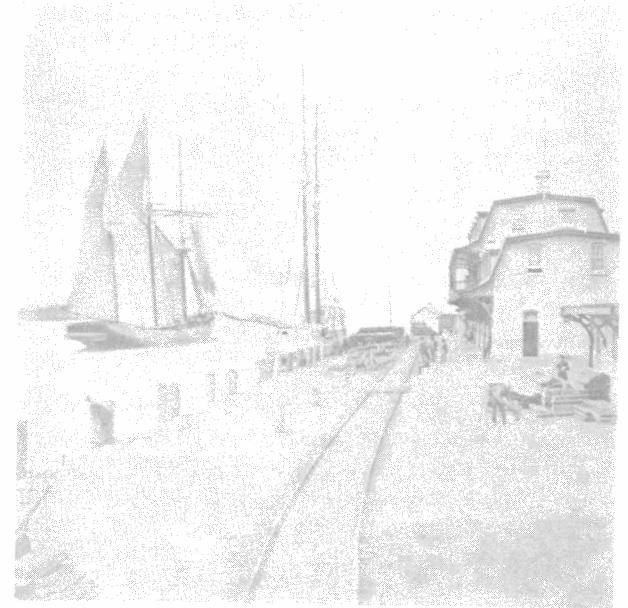
The Great Western Railroad opened from London to Sarnia in 1858. This meant an increase in population and greater business for the lumber yards and elevators. One year later the Grand Trunk Railroad opened its terminal in Point Edward. The station stood partly under where the Bluewater Bridge now stands. The tracks ran through an area of land that is now known as Canatara Park and along Cathcart Blvd.

One of the Finest Depots

The depot was considered to be one of the finest dining establishments this side of Toronto in the 1860's. Among the famous people who stayed there were Edward the VII, Prince of Wales Lord Monk, Governor General of Canada and Ulysses S. Grant who stopped in Pt. Edward with his family following his triumph in the Civil War. On the river side of the depot a shed was built for overseas immigrants to provide a place for bathing and washing their clothes.

On September 9th, 1871 the station's hotel burned down and the only building saved, a red brick one, was used as the ticket office. In 1874 a tunnel under the St. Clair River was proposed by the Grand Trunk General Manager, Sir Joseph Hickson to speed up traffic across the river from Sarnia to Port Huron. The construction began in 1889 and the tunnel opened in 1891. It brought rail traffic into Sarnia and cut off passenger trains to Pt. Edward.

The connection to Port Huron opened rail service to two frontier points; Niagara Falls and Windsor.



Skilbeck House 112 Maria Street

First Bank in Sarnia

One of Sarnia's earliest business men was Robert Skilbeck who came to Canada in 1830. He had been an officer of the Building Societies in England. Seeing the local shortage of cash and lack of methods of financing in Port Sarnia he suggested a syndicate be formed. In 1844 he opened the head office 'Port of Sarnia Syndicate' in his home on Maria Street. This was the first bank in Sarnia. Funds for the development of further buildings in the area came from people who were settled in the area and were financially well off. To make their money available, members deposited their surplus cash in Robert Skilbeck's syndicate and this money was put on loan to the highest bidder. It was a co-operative scheme, in that it received money only from its members and was loaned primarily to those members. To join the society, you had to buy a share of stock for fifty pounds. Afterwards, the profits were distributed to the depositors.

In the first year there were fifty-four members. At the first general meeting the following directors were elected: President - Captain R.E. Vidal, Secretary - Robert Skilbeck, Directors - Malcolm Cameron, F. Talfourd, Captain Wright R.N., Senator Alexander Vidal, Archibald Young, F. Fisher, H. Cross. Soon there was a demand for better facilities for loans and deposits. In 1846 the Upper Canada Building Society Act was passed. In 1847 the Port of Sarnia Syndicate wound up its business and formed the Port of Sarnia Building Society. On March 27th, 1847 the business was granted a certificate of incorporation. In 1855 they built a new building on the corner of Front and Lochiel Street and renamed it the 'Lambton Permanent Building and Investment Company'. In 1879 the syndicate was known as the Lambton Loan and Investment Company.



Architecture

The Skilbeck House has a three bay front. The windows above the door are Classical Revival architecture and in the structure are brick quoins. Note the unique square head door frame. The windows above the door and the dormer were added later.

Old Town Hall

In 1875 the town of Sarnia raised enough money to install its first sewers and a water-works system. The surplus money from this project made the building of a town hall possible. The site chosen was the corner of Lochiel and Christina Street. A three storey building of yellow brick was constructed with a belfry and high front steps. The building housed many departments. The ground floor housed the cells. The jail was called the 'County Boarding House'. The prisoners often wore ball and chains. The second floor housed the police station and the courtroom. An auditorium on the third floor was used as a ballroom for all of the big social dances, and was also an arena for boxing. In 1878 the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church put on a concert in the auditorium to mark the opening of the town hall.

The town hall building stood for seventy five years and in 1953 the building was torn down. Office space was rented until 1964 when a new city hall was built on the site of the former armouries, the corner of Christina and George Street. The old town hall was replaced by a building owned by the Hudson Bay Company. This building is now under the development of the T. Eaton Company to be incorporated into the new downtown mall.

The old town hall located at the corner of Lochiel and Christina St. which housed a jail, courtroom and an auditorium.



A farmers' market was located at the back of the town hall.

Sarnia Public Library

In 1898 Sarnia citizens petitioned town council for a free library. On June 19th, 1900, a new library was opened on leased property. Andrew Carnegie in 1903 offered town council \$15,000 to erect a library building on the condition that they provide a site and guarantee \$1,500 a year for library expenses. The council accepted his offer. A site was obtained in Victoria Park; then known as Victoria Square.

Believe it or not, at the time the Sarnia Public Library was built, children under the age of twelve were not allowed to use libraries. Mr. Gurd, the library board chairman, thought that this was inconsistent with the idea of a public library. In 1931 a room for children was set aside, and a story hour was developed. Sarnia was the one Ontario library that held a story hour for children.

The Sarnia Public Library is also credited as being one of the earliest collectors of Canadian art outside of the National Gallery. This collection was started during the 1920's.

The Lambton County Library system began in the basement of the Sarnia Public Library. It was the first county library system established in Ontario.



Kenwick Terrace Corner of George and Christina Street

The corner of George and Christina Street has seen many changes in the past century. This site became an exciting entertainment centre featuring the big name bands of the forties. Originally on this site a school house existed, but in 1892 the Sarnia Curling Club obtained this site and built St. Andrew's Rink. By 1925 a top floor was added for a dance hall and the lower floor was used as a garage year round. Lambton Motors used the lower floor until years later when the 'A & P' food chain moved in. During the Second World War a ramp was built to the second storey and cars were stored on the dance floor.

In 1943 the name changed from "St. Andrew's" to "Kenwick Terrace". Jack Kennedy and his wife bought the St. Andrew's Rink. Using the first three letters in his surname and the last four in her maiden name (Warwick), they formed the name 'Kenwick'.

By this period of time, big name band were a regular event. Among the names were Tommy Dorsey and Louis Armstrong. In Dorsey's words "The boys and I don't usually play in towns or cities the size of Sarnia, but this city has a reputation throughout the dance band and entertainment world and I just couldn't pass up Sarnia when this Canadian tour was arranged."

Dance fans came from fifty miles around to see the big name bands at Kenwick Terrace.



ONE NIGHT ONLY!
IN PERSON
TOMMY TUCKER
AND HIS ORCHESTRA
FRIDAY, MAY 5th, 1944
★ *Kenwick Terrace* ★
9 P.M. TO 1 A.M. ADMISSION \$1.75
ADVANCE SALE \$1.50

Monday Jan. 31st.
KENWICK TERRACE
Brings You
"Louis Armstrong"
And His Sensational Band

Featuring:

- BEA BOOZE
- JIMMY ANDERSON
- JOE GARLAND

Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, world's highest paid colored musician, trumpet player extraordinary and now acclaimed as the International "Trumpet King of Swing" makes a personal appearance with his sensational orchestra at KENWICK TERRACE, this coming Monday.

DANCING 9 P.M., UNTIL 1 A.M.

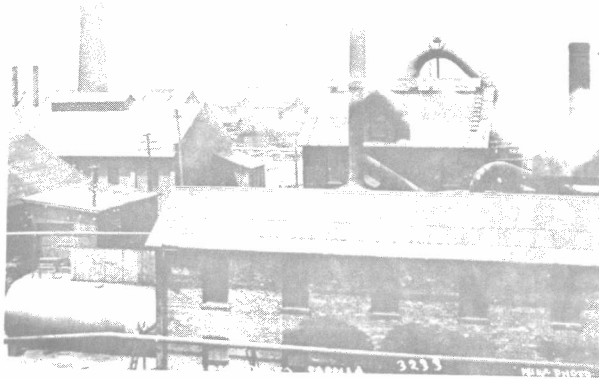
TICKETS ON SALE MANLEY'S & KENWICK TERRACE

ADVANCE SALE EACH \$1.50 — DANCE NIGHT \$1.75

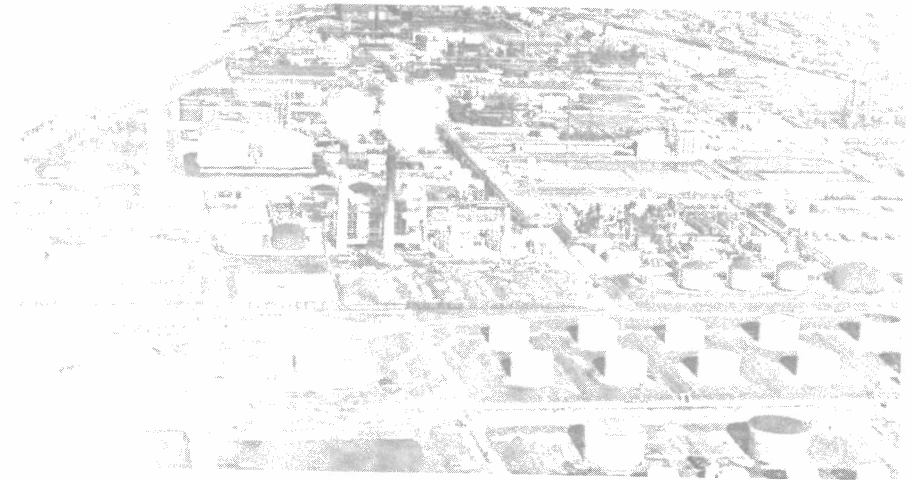


Kenwick Terrace Building as it was in its early days.

Sarnia's Chemical Valley



An aerial view of the Chemical Valley.



In 1897 the Imperial Oil Company developed a plant to refine crude oil brought in from Enniskillen. It was among the first of many industries built on the east side of the St. Clair River in the area called the Chemical Valley. By 1913 the local oil fields did not meet the Canadian oil demands. A pipeline was built to bring oil from Cygnet, Ohio, in America's midwest, to the Sarnia refinery. During the period of the Second World War, from 1939 to 1945, the Japanese stopped supplying natural rubber to Canada. The Canadian Government built Polymer in Sarnia to manufacture synthetic rubber.

To produce carbon black which is used in the manufacture of rubber, Cabot Carbon was built in 1952. Another product required for the production of synthetic rubber is styrene. The Canadian Government asked Dow Chemical of Midland, Michigan to locate in Sarnia to supply styrene. Dow purchased 165 acres of reservation property to build their refinery.

They produce such things as latex paint, antifreeze, weedkillers, fertilizers, insecticides and plastic wares.

In 1948, shortly after the Second World War, Fiberglas Canada built a plant to manufacture insulation. The product is used in residential applications, for insulating pipes, and for insulation in a variety of appliances.

Since these major industries produced a variety of valuable by-products, secondary industries were developed in neighbouring Sombra Township and the 'Chemical Valley' continued to extend south of the City limits. Much of this property along the river was originally designated as a Reserve for the Indians. They in turn sold portions to incoming industries, thereby bringing a measure of prosperity and employment to the Band.

Another portion, to the south of the Reserve, had been granted to Alexander Vidal for his service to the Royal Navy.

The potential for industrial growth in Lambton was recognized very early. The introduction of the Imperial Oil Company in 1897 led to the financial stability that exists in Sarnia today. At present, many countries throughout the world depend on the diverse products made here in Sarnia.

Downtown Development



Having initiated their own downtown redevelopment in the late sixties and early seventies the City of Sarnia is recognized as one of the leaders in redevelopment.

The construction of the Polysar Building, the Seaway Centre and Kenwick Place form the three corners in the plan to redevelop the downtown area. The Sarnia Planning Board predicts that downtown merchants will improve the commercial area within these boundaries. A downtown mall under the control of Cadillac Fairview and the T. Eaton Company will fill the area between Vidal Street and Christina, George Street and Cromwell. This area will consist of a combination of older stores and new facilities. An enclosed street mall will run along what is now Victoria Street between George and Christina Street and will have five entrances. The mall will include sixty to eighty stores lit by skylights, a large supermarket, theatres, and parking facilities for eight hundred vehicles. The mall comes as a result of interest and pride inspired by the three major developments.



Polysar Building

201 North Front Street

The Polysar Building is the first major commercial development in Sarnia's downtown core area. It was built to house the head office of Polysar Ltd. The building is perfectly symmetrical with two wings extending to the north and south. These two storey wings make a pleasing transition from the street to the main part of the building.

Its elegant exterior and landscaping which includes large open spaces on the Front Street side as well as the river side are a benefit to the people of Sarnia. The building is set back from the street making more space available for parking. The inside decor of the building is very well appointed with Polysar's corporate dining room at the top offering a fantastic view of the lake, river and city. The offices throughout the building are spacious and the windows are large to let in a maximum amount of light. This building is an asset to our community.



The Polysar Building from the St. Clair Parkway.



View of Polysar Building from Front Street facing south-west showing the two storey wings which extend to the north and south.

Seaway Centre 301 North Front Street

Like Kenwick Place, the Seaway Centre is a combined residential and commercial development. Phase One which runs parallel to Front Street is completed and Phase Two, another residential tower, running parallel to Lochiel Street west of Front Street, is yet to be started. The shape is different to the Sarnia area with angled balconies providing a good view and added privacy. On the river side of the development are two gardens, one on the St. Clair Parkway and one at building level.



Seaway Centre offers a view of the St. Clair River and downtown Sarnia.

Kenwick Place

160 George Street

The Kenwick Place was the first major residential highrise development to locate in Sarnia's downtown area. The building is a combined residential and commercial complex with central parking facilities for three hundred vehicles. The stores surrounding the tall residential tower offer convenient shopping for the residents of the tower. Placed along a winding court, the stores take on the appearance of a street mall.

The tower is elliptical in shape and offers a new dimension in architecture to the City of Sarnia. It has a very striking effect on the skyline from many miles around and will serve as a beautiful landmark for generations, as well as a stimulus to business and downtown population growth.



Acknowledgements

The Brothers of Saint Louis - Sarnia Community

Canada Employment & Immigration Commission - Joyce Halwerda.

Cliff Davidson - Local Historian, Sarnia Historical Society

Jean Elford - Local Historian, Lambton Historical Society

Ray Jenkins - Commissioner of Community Planning and Development, City of Sarnia

Jack Kennedy - Jack Kennedy Music Centre, Kenwick Place

R.H. Larsen - Executive Assistant to the City Manager of Community Planning and Development, City of Sarnia.

Fred Leaver - Manley's Ltd., Sarnia

Lambton County Library Headquarters, Wyoming, Ontario

Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board

Mac Redmond - Senior Planner, City of Sarnia

Marceil Saddy - Sarnia Gazette Editor

Sarnia Public Library - Reference Section

Appreciation is extended to members of the clergy who provided information on the history of their respective churches. We also wish to extend thanks to the owners of the homes researched, citizens who provided a wealth of background information and supervisors of the businesses and buildings featured in this booklet.

Architectural Terminology

Bargeboard: projected boards placed against the incline of the gable of a building and hiding the ends of the horizontal roof timbers; often decorated.

Bay Window: a three-sectioned window in which the sections are angled towards each other.

Belfry: upper room or storey in a tower in which bells are hung.

Bellcast: bell-shaped roof.

Bellcast Mansard: square shaped roof curved at base as in bell-shaped roof.

Bracket: small supporting piece of stone or other material often formed of scrolls to carry a projecting weight.

Buttresses: mass of masonry or brickwork projecting from or built against a wall to give additional strength.

Classical Revival: an old style of architecture which is used in buildings constructed recently.

Dormer Window: window placed vertically in a sloping roof and with a roof of it's own.

Facade: the front portion of a building.

Gable: triangular upper portion of a wall at the end of a pitched roof.

Ionic Capitals: Decorative element located on uppermost part of a column; developed in the Greek Ionic period.

Keystone: central stone of an arch; sometimes carved.

Mansard: square-shaped roof.

Pediment Roof Line: low pitched triangular gable that finishes the ends of a roof.

Quoins: one of the stones forming a corner; a cornerstone.

Turret: small and slender tower.

Revised Edition, December, 1980
Sarnia, Ontario, Canada
Typesetting Sarnia Gazette
Lithographed by Marcy Printing Co., Ltd.